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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study was to report an update of demographic information about instructional developers. Six demographic characteristics from two studies on instructional developers in 1973 and 1976 were compared and discussed. It was concluded that the instructional development movement is attracting younger members and more female professionals. Although most instructional developers were found in higher education and engaged in a broad range of professional activities, the location of instructional developers was becoming more geographically dispersed. An overall analysis of demographic characteristics of instructional developers indicated that instructional development has experienced positive growth since 1973. (Author)

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The Instructional Developer: An Update

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Abstract

The purpose of this study was to report an update of demographic information about instructional developers. Six demographic characteristics from two studies on instructional developers in 1973 and 1976 were compared and discussed. It was concluded that the instructional development movement is attracting younger members and more female professionals. Although most instructional developers were found in higher education and engaged in a broad range of professional activities, the location of instructional developers was becoming more geographically dispersed. An overall analysis of demographic characteristics of instructional developers indicated that instructional development has experienced positive growth since 1973.

The Instructional Developer: An Update

A recent study on the impact of collective bargaining upon instructional development (Schaffer, 1976) analyzed various demographic characteristics of instructional developers. A review of the research literature had found Hoban's study "The Instructional Developer" (1974) examined similar characteristics. Although comparisons by Schaffer of the demographic characteristics of both studies found some new trends, they were not extensively discussed in the Schaffer study. The purpose of this report is to update the information about the demographic characteristics of instructional developers found in the Schaffer study.

Both studies surveyed members of the Division of Instructional Development (DID) of the Association for Educational Communications and Technology (AECT). Approximately 60% (N=221) of the total membership of DID returned Hoban's questionnaire. A random sample of 197 DID members, (29% of the total membership) was drawn for the Schaffer study. An approximate return of 59% was realized from the Schaffer sample. Both studies considered nonrespondents as probably not primarily engaged in the field of instructional development. Six demographic characteristics were similar in the two studies and subject to analysis.

The first characteristic was the age of respondents. Hoban divided his respondents at 40 years of age and found "that a healthy mixture of all ages is actively participating in the field." The Schaffer study noted a trend towards younger DID members with 66% of the instructional developers reporting being under 40 (Table 1). Probably the younger instructional developers were recent graduates of instructional technology programs which advocate instructional development concepts associated with the DID. Overall, the division still has a "healthy mixture" of age groups.

Insert Table 1 about here

While males disproportinately outnumber females (males, 78%; females, 22%), the percentage of females has increased from 9% to 22%. This increase occurred in the male dominate membership of AECT. The majority of the membership (all respondents 71%; instructional developers 79%) is still found in higher education. These findings indicated as Hoban extrapolated that the dominant centers of systematic instructional development are the college campuses with the majority of instructional developers.

The intended audience for 61% of the instructional developer's efforts in Hoban's study was the college and university audience (Table 2). This percentage by 1976 has increased to 71%. The question

raised by Hoban still remains why elementary and secondary schools are not recipients of the instructional developer's efforts.

Insert Table 2 about here

Regarding professional activities, 33% of Schaffer's respondents considered themselves instructional developers. Only 17% of Hoban's respondents were classified as actively engaged in instructional development efforts. The remaining 67% of Schaffer's sample were divided into 40% as administrators and 27% as teachers. Apparently, DID is attracting a broad range of professionals which should be a positive contribution towards the division's viability.

Although in both studies New York, California, and Texas still geographically account for approximately 23% of respondents who claimed to be engaged in instructional development activities, the Midwest dominance has diminished. While the Midwest represented by Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Michigan, Ohio, and Wisconsin were 45% of Hoban's respondents, they only accounted for 24% of the Schaffer sample. States such as Florida, Maryland, Pennsylvania, South Carolina, and Virginia now account for approximately 20%. Apparently other parts of the country are starting to emerge after an initial slow growth.

Regarding who is an instructional developer, the Schaffer study found that the developer has changed since 1973. The instructional development movement is attracting younger members and more female professionals. Although higher education and its students benefit most from the developer's efforts, the location of instructional development activities are becoming more geographically dispersed. The instructional developers joining DID are engaged in a broad range of professional activities. An overall analysis of the demographic characteristics of instructional developers indicated that instructional development has experienced positive growth since 1973. This growth is a strong indicator of the viability of instructional development and the instructional developer.

Table 1

Results in Percentages of Hoban and Schaffer's

Studies on Instructional Developers

Demographic Characteristics		Hoban All Respondents	Schaffer All Respondents	Schaffer Instructional Developers
Age	Less than 40	46	53	66
	41+	54	47	35
Sex	Male	91	78	79
	Female	9	22	21
Type of Institution	College and University	77	71	79

Table 2

Results in Percentages of Hoban and Schaffer's

Studies on Instructional Developers

Demographic Characteristics		Hoban All Respondents	Schaffer All Respondents
Intended Audiences for Instructional Development Efforts	College	61	71
	Elementary Secondary	18 (±2)	15 (±2)
Professional Activities	Instructional Development	17	33
	Teaching, Administration, Other	83	67
Geographic Locations	New York	10	11
	California	7	7
	Texas	5	5
	Midwest	45	24

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